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Commission Briefings Address How to Create a More Resilient State Water Project

The California Water Commission will launch its 2021 State Water Project briefings at the March 17 meeting by introducing this year's theme: creating a resilient State Water Project by addressing climate change and aging infrastructure to provide multiple benefits for Californians.

The Commission will hear three presentations: an overview of the State Water Project (SWP), an update on the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, and an update on DWR's efforts to address issues related to aging infrastructure. The Commission will also be briefed on the Flexible Resources Study, which assesses the SWP's potential to support the state's clean energy policy.

In addition to providing a water supply for more than 27 million Californians and 750,000 acres of farmland, the SWP's other benefits include flood control, power generation, fish and wildlife protection, and recreational opportunities. The SWP, the largest state-built water and power generator and delivery infrastructure in the nation, remains one of California's vital assets.

"As the State Water Project marks more than 60 years since its construction began, DWR continues to be dedicated to ensuring a reliable and resilient water supply for future generations while addressing the challenges of an aging infrastructure and climate change," said SWP Deputy Director Ted Craddock.

As required by the Water Code, the Commission conducts an annual review on the progress of the construction and operation of the SWP, focusing on how the SWP adapts and responds to hydrological extremes expected with climate change, restores critical ecosystems, and addresses aging infrastructure. The Commission reports its findings and recommendations to DWR and the Legislature. This briefing will serve to inform the Commission in preparation for the 2021 annual review.

"The SWP is the backbone of our state's water system," said Commission Chair Teresa Alvarado. "The annual Commission review provides Californians with the assurance that the system is meeting the challenges of climate extremes today and that we are developing a more resilient system that provides multiple benefits for the future."

Future 2021 briefings include "Climate and the Delta" in May, with a focus on green infrastructure, upper watershed management, forecast-informed reservoir operations, and Delta conveyance; "Storage and Conveyance Infrastructure" in July, featuring asset management and dam safety; and "Partnering Efforts"

in September, with a look at the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and the state of groundwater recharge, land use issues, and subsidence.

The California Water Commission will conduct its March 17 meeting remotely. At the same time, the Commission remains committed to conducting its business in an open and transparent manner. To learn how you can comment, and to view the full agenda, visit cwc.ca.gov/meetings.

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The nine-member California Water Commission uses its public forum to explore water management issues from multiple perspectives and to formulate recommendations to advise the director of the California Department of Water Resources, and as appropriate, the California Natural Resources Agency, the Governor and Legislature on ways to improve water planning and management in response to California's changing hydrology. For more information regarding the California Water Commission visit cwc.ca.gov.

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